

Changing the change

Design Visions, Proposals and Tools

An international conference on the role and potential of design research in the transition towards sustainability

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Organised by Co-ordination of Italian Design Research Doctorates with
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UPSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

Moving sustainable design 'upstream' in the innovation process to enable sustainable innovation

This project aims to move sustainable design to the early stages of the development process (Upstream). It has triggered a unique sustainable design collaboration - between Forum for the Future (FFTF) and IDEO¹ - seeing **leading edge design and sustainability skills** and knowledge transferred. The ultimate goal is to enable companies to engage in 'Upstream' sustainable design services resulting in sustainable innovation.

Introduction

Most current sustainable design is 'too much, too late'. It takes place at detailed stages and leads to incremental improvements at best. This project aims to develop a **method** to move sustainable design to the early stages of the development process (Upstream), to design out sustainability problems and develop entirely new and inherently more sustainable product service and business ideas.

Upstream will deliver:

- 1) information sharing between two pilot projects already underway with **Unilever**² and **Corus**³ as well as between FFTF and IDEO;
- 2) a method for broader Upstream design and innovation offers
- 3) synthesis & dissemination through creative, inspiring and imaginative means (e.g. visual scenarios, storyboards etc)

short term deliverables

- Produce a prototype method, for **integrating sustainable design** at the early stages - which is developed and tested through real, live pilot projects
- Produce a series of actions plans and spin-off projects for the two pilot partners (Unilever & Corus)
- Collaborate, share and learn **design and sustainability skills** and Upstream experiences
- Develop at least one **Future Case scenario** - to synthesis and articulate the method and learning
- Produce an article on the process, learning and case summary as a first step to dissemination

long term deliverables

- The delivery of inherently more sustainable products and services from FFTF partners⁴
- Sustainable design is integrated earlier in development processes – and **used to inspire** new ideas, business, products and services
- Produce an Upstream service offer to disseminate
- To make FFTF's work more innovative

¹ www.ideo.com

² www.unilever.com

³ www.corusgroup.com

⁴ www.forumforthefuture.org.uk/partners

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- _ IDEO **integrates sustainability into its core design processes** and makes it more inspiring & transformative

specific activities

Phase 1: Individual, live projects with two pilot companies to integrate sustainable design at the early stages of their development processes. N.B. Already completed with **Unilever**, underway with **Corus**.

Phase 2: FFTF and IDEO collaborate to develop methods for:

- a) an **information sharing process** between the two pilot cases
- b) development of a **method and model** to summarise the learning
- c) a **creative process** with IDEO to synthesis the method and learning into (at least one) Future Case(s)
- d) produce an article summarising the learning and the cases as first dissemination

Phase 3: Larger publication featuring the learning, method and Future Case(s) (further funding needed) agency/NGO collaboration on innovative sustainable methods

relevance to changing the change

The early stages of product and service development (Upstream) are the **key to systemic transformations** in sustainable design and innovation. *Changing the Change* is clearly focussing on methods that can enable transformations towards more sustainable products and services. We see this project as fitting in wholly with the conference aims. The work is replicable and transferrable, as it will be disseminated through the service offer applied through FFTF's work with a wide variety of partners and through IDEO's subsequent work with their clients.

All the outcomes from the project will be practical and tangible as the process used is within a real-life context which proposes **learning by doing** with real organisations.

partners & stakeholders

- _ Two pilot partnering organisations (Unilever and Corus)
- _ They have agreed to participate in the information sharing on results
- _ IDEO will be the lead partner on the development of the Future Cases and will be the collaborative partner on the method/model development
- _ Dissemination through publication - we have secured interest from the UK Design Council to fund and/or participate in the final dissemination

r.e. visuals

Upstreaming Sustainable Innovation will produce highly communicative visual outputs, based on future cases, design methods and/or mapping. However as the project is currently underway we have no visual outputs ready yet. The workshops with IDEO are due in April 2008 so all visual outputs will be ready by 26th May 2008.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Forum for the Future_track record

Forum for the Future is a sustainable development charity. We work with forward-looking organisations – in business and the public sector – to find practical ways to build a future that is environmentally viable, socially just and economically prosperous.

Forum for the Future's aim is: **“To show that a sustainable future is both possible and desirable.”**

We have set three high-level objectives for the next three years:

1. “To prove that sustainable business is more successful.”
2. “To help leading organisations deliver improved public services for people, places and the environment.”
3. “To demonstrate through sustainable development how our lives can be better.”

Our relevance to the project is:

1. Forum's major focus on **sustainable business, innovation and futures** place us in a unique position to leverage this project
2. The partnership model provides a strong platform for dissemination of the methods
3. We are constantly seeking new ways to work, collaborate and partner up - and doing so through this project will be a unique way by working with IDEO (early stage designers) on a live project process in which a **design-led and sustainability-driven organisation** will share experiences
4. Systemic transformations will be delivered by considering sustainable design at early, concept and strategic stages of the development process. Our hi-level/senior and strategic advisory access allows us to do that currently. This project intends to deliver that through real, practical projects and through a methodology development
5. Sustainable design is about outcomes and solutions and our innovation work, goal and working practices align closely to this. Forum's positive and practical approach fits this hands-on approach well

team competencies

Chris Sherwin, Head of Innovation

Chris specialises in sustainable marketing and innovation, the development of sustainable products and services, creative thinking and innovative approaches to sustainability. Prior to joining Forum, Chris worked on ecodesign and sustainable innovation in the electronics sector - with Philips Electronics and Electrolux. Chris has a PhD in 'Innovative Ecodesign from Cranfield University.

Fiona Bennie, Senior Sustainability Advisor, Innovation

Fiona works on sustainable innovation and design strategy for product and service development, focusing on creative thinking and problem solving for future challenges. She has worked as a design strategist on strategic and sustainability-related design projects for a London innovation consultancy, the UK Design Council and L'Oreal in Turin. Fiona studied at the Milan Politecnico and has an MA in Strategic Design and a BA in Italian and Industrial Design. She is currently working towards a Postgrad Diploma in Sustainable Development from Imperial College London.